

# Youth Homelessness in West Michigan

## Community Report on Runaway & Homeless Youth Program Year 2015



Growing up is hard enough without having to worry about where you'll sleep. Yet every year in West Michigan, 2,000 youth are growing up while homeless. Arbor Circle meets many of these youth at each step in their journey – from the streets to stability.

As the only agency in West Michigan with a full range of care designed for runaway and homeless youth, Arbor Circle is often one of the first to spot emerging needs. We closely monitor the state of youth homelessness and how our community can help. **This report shares what Arbor Circle saw during the 2015 program year. To learn more and get involved, visit [ArborCircle.org](http://ArborCircle.org).**

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### How many youth did Arbor Circle meet out in the community?

**6,812**

**Youth ages of 14 to 24 encountered  
in our community by Arbor Circle outreach staff  
*October 2014 through September 2015***

<b>5,993</b> Youth experiencing unstable housing	<b>4,655</b> Youth received at least one follow-up contact	<b>4,360</b> Youth received direct information and referrals
<b>217</b> Youth received ongoing case management support	<b>11</b> Outdoor encampments were located by Arbor Circle	<b>54</b> Presentations were given to community partners

### What does this mean for homeless youth?

Runaway and homeless youth have often experienced trauma. For many reasons, they feel left behind, so Arbor Circle meets them where they are. Our mobile street outreach team is out on the streets, at encampments and beyond. Often a sandwich, a toothbrush, and a listening ear are the tools we use to build trust. They become a youth's first steps from the streets to stability.

## How many youth did Arbor Circle provide with shelter and support?

The Bridge at Arbor Circle is a 24-hour, 365-day emergency shelter for youth in crisis in West Michigan. Stays at The Bridge can last up to 21 days. During that time, Arbor Circle guides youth to learn new communication and relationship-building skills, provides them with counseling to support their emotional health, and offers family counseling and community connections to help them reunite with their families, schools, and community.

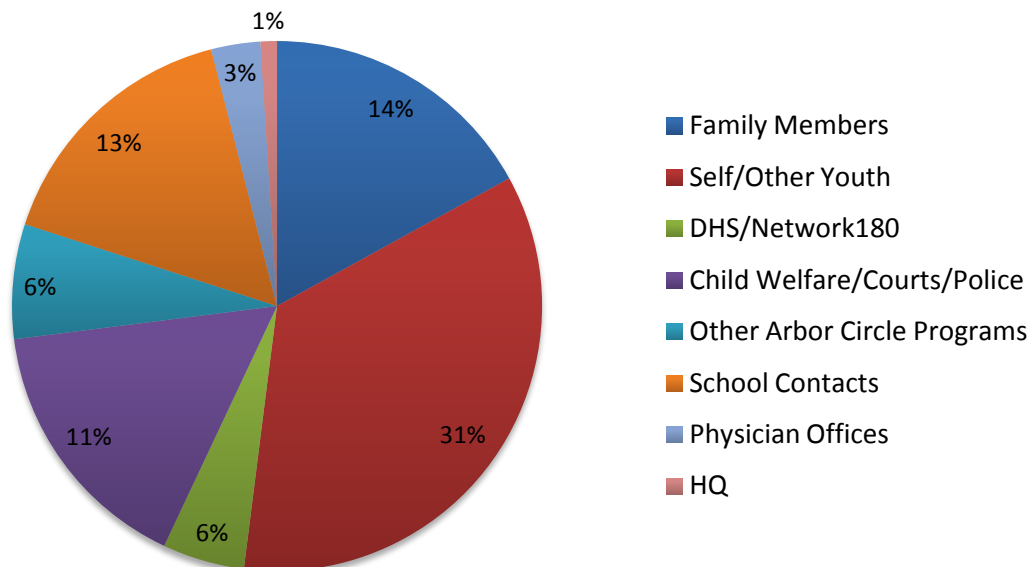
**629**

### Youth ages 10 to 17 served at The Bridge

*Including overnight and short-term stays,  
October 2014 through September 2015*

<b>209</b> Youth sheltered overnight	<b>14 days</b> Average length of stay	<b>93%</b> Engagement rate with youth
<b>91%</b> of program youth were discharged to safe housing placements		

## How were youth referred to The Bridge?



## How many youth received long-term support for their stability?

Some youth need more intensive therapy, job training, or housing assistance to find stability. At every step, Arbor Circle therapeutic and case management staff supports them. This consistent guidance helps youth build trust and experience having a caring adult invested in their potential.

**228**

**Youth ages 16 to 21 served  
in Arbor Circle's broader homeless youth services  
October 2014-September 2015**

Services include crisis intervention, counseling, case management (e.g., job application assistance, transportation), housing assistance, and independent living skills training.

<b>84%</b> Improved self-sufficiency through increased income	<b>12 months</b> Average length of participation	<b>33%</b> Youth were pregnant and/or parenting
<b>95%</b> engagement rate with youth		
<b>84%</b> of program youth were discharged to positive housing placements		
<b>Themes:</b> Not enough affordable housing to meet the need, youth fearing adult shelters, LGBTQ+ youth identifying special concerns for their safety and stability, and food insecurity.		

## How were youth referred for services?

